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Therapy Through Movement: A Study of Dance Movement Therapy Through an Individual Performance Experience

Erin Stover

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THERAPY THROUGH MOVEMENT:

A study of dance movement therapy through an individual performance experience.

Erin Stover

Mentor:

Processor Teresa Heiland, Ph. D



In partial fulfillment of
The Bachelor of Arts Degree in Dance
Loyola Marymount University
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Thank you!

I just wanted to thank the entire faculty for all of their inspiration and support over the last four years. I have learned so many lifelong lessons in my time here at LMU and I have the faculty here in the dance department to thank for that. I have been changed for good because of my experience as a dance major here.

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Thanks again to the entire faculty for your guidance and input over the past four years. You have all been a true inspiration to me.

THERAPY THROUGH MOVEMENT

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Running Head: DANCE/MOVEMENT THERAPY

Dance/Movement Therapy

Erin Stover

Loyola Marymount University

I. Analogy:

All art forms are therapeutic by nature, especially dance; therefore dance is very beneficial as a movement therapy. There are various similarities between being trained in dance and using dance as a movement therapy. In fact, many dancers experience the therapeutic tendencies of dance without even realizing it. The elements of basic dance training that are similar to elements of dance movement therapy are that they provide comfort include the familiarity, trusting oneself, and preparedness to lead others.

The first element of dance that proves therapeutic to both dancers and non-dancers is a sense of structure and familiarity. Every dance class is structured in essentially the same way. This provides people with a sense of structure, and for people who feel lost in their lives, even this simple class structure can be comforting. Spending even just an hour in a structured environment can make a person feel comfortable and can help them find structure in their own lives. Also coming to a dance class, or a dance therapy session, with the same group of people every week creates a sense of community. Spending this much time with the same group of people creates a community of people that you can relate to and depend on. This is especially comforting to people who are hurting and feel like they have no one. Spending an hour a week dancing with the same group of people makes people feel less alone. Also, this community can provide comfort and familiarity. Knowing that the people that you are dancing with are experiencing the same things you are is comforting and makes you feel like you have someone to turn to. By being vulnerable and physically expressing yourself in this community of people, you begin to feel comfortable and safe with them. The structure, community, safety and

familiarity of the dance community is therapeutic not only to those who are hurting, but to everyone who experiences it.

The next element of dancing that proves therapeutic is learning to trust oneself. Typically in dance class, it is asked that the dancers apply the movement to some sort of personal experience. The dancers are often taught choreography, and then asked to relate that choreography to an experience in their life to enhance the performance of that movement. This is identical to exercises that are often used in dance/movement therapy. In order to help people who are emotionally hurting recover from a traumatic time in their lives, dance therapists will ask them to go inside and feel their pain and then move the way that pain makes them feel. Also, in composition classes, dancers are often asked to do exercises involving emotions. For instance, one exercise is to write down three words that describe how the dancer is feeling at that moment in time. They are then asked to choreograph a short phrase of movement based on these words, and the rest of the class guesses what the emotion is. Similar exercises are used in dance movement therapy, allowing dance to express what words cannot. These exercises allow people to go inside and bring their emotions to the surface using movement. With this, people then learn to know, trust and believe in themselves. They also feel free expressing themselves and the emotions that they have never been able to express before, in this comfortable and safe environment.

Dancers are trained to lead without even realizing it. Studying movement teaches dancers how to properly warm up and be in tune with their body, mind and spirit. Thus, dancers have the ability to lead others in this same action. Also, learning choreography and technique, dancers are naturally skilled to lead others in choreographic exercises,

technique and strengthening. With years of training in the field of dance, dancers are naturally bred to be leaders and to lead others in their art. With movement being a naturally therapeutic activity for dancers, they will want to share this experience with others, especially those who are in need of therapy. Thus, dancers are perfect candidates to become dance therapists, and it is a field that dancers should be introduced to as a potential career path.

There are several parallels between dance training and dance as movement therapy. These parallels provide perfect examples as to why dancers are prepared to become dance therapists through their basic dance training. The structure of class and the comfort of the dance community to which dancers belong provide a safety net for those in need of dance therapy. The safety and comfort of their dance therapy group allows patients to express themselves in a way they never could before. Also, through movement dancers are asked to go inside and express deep emotions through movement. In dance movement therapy, patients are asked to do the same thing. This allows both dancers and patients to better understand, trust and believe in themselves. Lastly, dancers are natural leaders because of the repetition of class structure, learning and creating choreography, and their understanding of their body, mind and spirit. Dancers who are passionate about their art want to share this with the world, especially if it can help those who are hurting. It is because of these three essential parts of dance training that dancers are perfect candidates for becoming dance movement therapists. Through years of dance training, without even realizing it, dancers have been simultaneously trained to use dance as a form of therapy. It is important that dancers are informed about the impact that dance

therapy can have on those who use it, and that this is a career option for those who are passionate about movement and helping others.

II. What Is Dance Therapy?

Dance/movement therapy tends to benefit patients in a way that no other form of therapy can. There is something about movement that heals the body, mind and spirit that simply discussion groups and role-playing cannot fulfill. Stanton-Jones (1992) states, "Because it uses both verbal and nonverbal modes of interaction, it 'has been found to be especially effective in engaging patients whose capacity to participate in strictly verbal group therapy is limited' (Sandel and Johnson 1983:134)" (p. 2). The movement aspect of dance movement therapy combined with the discussion involved allows people to communicate physically with their bodies helping them to better understand what it is that they are feeling or trying to portray, thus the words come more easily.

Dance movement therapy can be helpful to patients experiencing a wide range of problems, disorders and emotions. According to Kristina Stanton-Jones, author of the book *An Introduction to Dance movement Therapy in Psychiatry* (1992),

Generally, dance movement therapy groups are of use to patients who 1. Would benefit from improving their interpersonal skills 2. Are felt to need some reconnection to their physical selves. 3. Would be comfortable initiating improvised, impromptu gesture or movement, which the rest of the group would follow, and who would attempt to follow others 4. Could manage a general discussion on the theme of feelings of anger, frustration, or loneliness, which are typical themes that patients bring to such groups (p. 86).

Dance as a movement therapy allows those who are uncomfortable interacting with other people to gain confidence by communicating through movement, without having to use words. Through movement therapy these patients are able become more comfortable with interpersonal communication without having to communicate through language.

Movement serves as a crutch allowing patients to overcome their fears of interpersonal communication without words. Dance movement therapy benefits those who feel their mind and body in disconnect. Movement allows ones thoughts and emotions to come out through physical movement enabling body and mind to relate in a way that no other form of therapy can provide. Patients who are comfortable with improvisational movement or are comfortable following the movement of others can benefit from movement therapy by allowing their bodies to release their minds and move freely without thinking. This movement free of thought allows patients to escape from the thoughts and worries that constantly plague their minds and simply move their bodies. After the movement exercises patients will be able to comfortably and freely discuss their feelings and emotions with the group knowing that others feel the same way, and being able to relate to them after the movement experience they have just shared.

Movement allows patients to feel more human and helps them to better understand that they are a body existing in space. Patients with emotional disorders often do not feel that they belong among other people in society. Movement allows these patients to gain a better sense of physical human movement. As Stanton-Jones (1992) states, "Simply getting the patients to feel a sense of their own impact (or weight) as their feet touch the ground in walking, stamping or hopping often gives them the appearance of being more grounded, and more connected to their surroundings" (p. 93). Through

movement, these patients are able to feel a part of the space in which they are moving, and they physically feel their surroundings bringing them to a reality when they naturally tend to live in their thoughts.

Dance/movement therapy is an important career choice for dancers, but is often overlooked or unheard-of by most dancers. Many dancers do not fully come to their dancing maturity, meaning that they don't realize all of the emotional benefits that dancing has had on them, until college. Without realizing this, dancers cannot fully understand the importance of dance movement therapy. Thus, it is important that dance movement therapy be introduced to dancers in college, because it is a time when they are coming to their full maturity and trying to discover which path in life to take. If dancers have been positively influenced by, and fully appreciative of the healing, centering and focusing state that dance has given them, then they should consider dance therapy as a viable career path.

III. Approaches to Dance/Movement Therapy:

There are a variety of approaches that can be taken in dance movement therapy sessions. "Dance/movement therapy is a form of psychotherapy that utilizes movement as a medium of interaction and intervention promoting change." (Malchiodi, p. 70). To achieve this, there are several theoretical orientations within the field including the Chace Approach, the Integrated Developmental Approach and the Authentic Movement Approach.

Marian Chace was a major pioneer in the field of dance movement therapy. She developed a basic tool for establishing non-verbal relationships known as *mirroring* or

attunement. In this exercise, the patients are asked to move, and the therapist must mirror their movement, moving identically alongside them. This allows the movers to rhythmically communicate through dance and movement, which is considered fundamental. This technique also allows the therapist to “initiate trusting and meaningful contact with patients,” (Malchiodi, p. 72) allowing them to understand the patient on a deep and genuine level. Once therapist and patient are on this level, the patient’s thoughts are validated, and the therapist can accept their emotional experience.

The next approach to dance movement therapy is the Integrated Developmental Approach, in which therapists “observe developmental phases in movement and help clients work through developmental blocks, regressions and delays” (Malchiodi, p. 73). This approach encourages a body-level understanding of the individual patient, their interpersonal relationships, groups and family systems throughout the life cycle (Malchiodi, p. 73). It provides a basic framework for how to understand human development, taking on a body-mind-spirit approach to therapy. The therapist observes the patient’s interpretation of movement over time to gain a better understanding of human development based on the body, the mind and the spirit of the patient.

The third approach is called the Authentic Movement Approach. Authentic movement is not artistic or structured, it is simply moving the way the person feels at that moment in time, without being influenced by any outside source. Joan Chodorow, dance movement therapist, describes the process, “Dance/movement is one of the most direct ways to reach back to our earliest experiences... By attending to the world of bodily felt sensations, the mover recreates a situation that is in many ways similar to that of an infant who swims in a sensory-motor world” (Malchiodi, P. 73). Authentic movement allows

patients to reach back to an experience that is painful for them to talk about, and express their feelings through their own personal movement. As the therapist watches this movement happening, they are able to internalize the movement to understand the patient's personal experiences.

"Dance/movement therapy is the psychotherapeutic use of movement to promote emotional, cognitive, physical, and social integration of individuals" (www.adta.org). It is therapeutic to all people whether they are in need of psychiatric help or not. The fact that dancers have experienced the therapeutic tendencies of movement through their training makes them perfect candidates as dance/movement therapists, which is why it is important that they be introduced to dance/movement therapy as a potential career. The structure and community of dance, learning to find and express oneself, and the body-mind-spirit connection involved in dance and movement make it therapeutic, especially to those people in need of therapeutic help. Dancers who appreciate the positive healing state that dance has given them, and want to share this phenomenon with others, must be introduced to dance/movement therapy as a viable career path.

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Abstract:

Dance has always been therapeutic for me. When I was young, dance was my way of discovering who I was and it helped me to focus my life when I felt confused or frustrated. When I was hurting, dance guided me. For nineteen years I observed the healing powers of dance. It wasn't until I came to LMU that I learned that there is actually a career for dancers who are interested in the connections between human psychology and movement. Dance Movement Therapy is a branch of psychology for healing various physical and psychological conditions through dance. As a form of expressive therapy, DMT is founded on the basis that movement and emotion are directly related. I became interested in discovering the ways that dance therapy's techniques are applied to individuals seeking change in their lives, and how those techniques compare and contrast to the way dancing has been therapeutic to me.

In my thesis you will see that I began documenting the learning and growth experiences I had while rehearsing a dance with Ursula Payne. I focused on my work in Ursula's piece for the Fall Dance Concert and the way it impacted me. While examining my rehearsal process, I was able to relate my work with Ursula to the therapeutic tendencies that dance provides. From there, I conducted a review of the field of Dance Therapy, to see if it might be the right career for me. In my research I learned the benefits of dance movement therapy, how to become a dance movement therapist, who dance movement therapists strive to help and where they work. Dance Movement Therapy is a career for dancers that allows us to share movement and its healing powers with people who need healing. I love to dance, and I have experienced the way that dance heals. After reviewing the field of dance therapy, I believe this career path is a good fit for me. I hope to share this healing with others through Dance Movement Therapy.

Dancing has always been my passion in life. Although I have put a lot of sweat, blood and tears into the art over the years, dancing has given me so much in return. While growing up, dancing began as a hobby. I loved to dance but had no idea how much of an impact it would eventually have on my life. As soon as I hit my teen years, dance became more than a hobby, it became my artistic outlet. No matter what happened in my life whether I was stressed from school, having problems with my family or friends, or when I broke up with my boyfriend, dancing could always make me happy. The studio was my sanctuary and my second home. As soon as I walked into the dance studio nothing else seemed to matter. Had dance not been a part of my life, I do not know how I would have overcome some of the things that I did back then. I would not be as strong of a person as I am now if it weren't for the art of dance.

The things that I learned in my basic dance training have helped me to develop into the person that I am today. I learned at a very young age about discipline, respect, hard work, teamwork, how to build muscles, how to strengthen muscles, and how to keep my body healthy. Each of these traits is very important; however, I think that the most important thing that has been instilled in me through my intense dance training is gaining self-awareness. This is not something that is easily taught or understood. I know and understand who I am, my body, my mind, and my soul. Many people my age do not know themselves the way I know myself, and I am thankful to my dance training for providing me with this deep understanding. Not only do I have a great self-awareness, but I also have a keen awareness of those around me. Because I have studied my own mind, body and soul through my dance training I have learned to understand others as well. I can read a person's personality, thoughts and emotions sometimes even by just looking at

them, and I believe that I am better able to do this because dancing has taught me so much about myself. We are all different, and this art form has taught me to appreciate our differences and to love one another and ourselves.

My dance training over the last nineteen years has led me to these personal discoveries. For this project, I wanted to focus on my rehearsal and performance experience as an adult, dancing in a college atmosphere. Growing up, dancing was simply a hobby, an extra-curricular activity. By reflecting specifically on a work choreographed by Ursula Payne for the Fall Dance Concert at Loyola Marymount University, I am able to describe an entirely different rehearsal and performance experience. In the following section, I lay out a journal of the day-to-day processes of rehearsing a piece in which I performed.

Going into this rehearsal process I had no idea what to expect. I had never seen Ursula's work before nor had I ever even met her. I had heard rumors that her class was very intense and that she expected a lot out of her dancers. I was also nervous about the rehearsal process. Since Ursula was a guest artist and could only be in town for one week, we were putting four months work of choreography and rehearsal into one week. I was worried about having the stamina to complete this stressful week. We were to meet Saturday and Sunday from 9am to 9pm and Monday through Friday 6pm to 10pm, our final meeting would be Saturday 9am to 12 noon. At the end of this week, the piece would be completed and from there we would rehearse under the guidance of Chad Hall weekly until the show to clean and perfect the work.

This piece was titled "Standing in the Middle of Chaos, This Could be Your Finest Hour", and was choreographed by Ursula Payne. Ursula Payne is a tenured

associated professor and choreographer at Slippery Rock University in Pennsylvania. She is also the Artistic Director of Soul Deep Creations. She has received various awards for her work including two choreographic fellowships from the Pennsylvania Council of the Arts in 2000 and 2002. I chose to reflect on Ursula's work because this rehearsal process was atypical to most. It was a very stressful and strenuous week, yet it felt so comfortable and satisfying. It is the perfect example of the way dancing can be therapeutic even when it is simultaneously stressful. I learned a lot about myself, about the people I was dancing with and about life through this process. I maintained a detailed journal throughout this intense rehearsal week in hopes of capturing the emotional and physical journey that I was experiencing. In my writing, I wanted to be able to reflect back on my experience and delve deeper into the therapeutic tendencies that can be found in this kind of process. Dancing has always been therapeutic to me, and after studying the field of dance therapy, I wanted to reflect on one particular rehearsal experience and really analyze its impact on me. The following are journal entries of my experience throughout this process.

Working with Ursula Payne:

DAY 1:

The first day of rehearsal I was nervous. I could hardly sleep the night before, and I had to call my mom that morning so that she could give me positive reinforcement, ensures me that I was a great and more than capable enough of a dancer. Also, that Ursula Payne would love me and my work and that I would survive this 8-hour day. Having never met or worked with Ursula in the past, I had no idea what to expect. No one did. We had heard rumors that she was scary, that she was mean, that she worked her dancers really

hard, and my personal favorite was; "Her last name is Payne for a reason." So as we all waited for Ursula to arrive we were anxious, nervous and excited all at once.

When she arrived, she was very friendly, helpful and fun to work with. All of our worries were for nothing. I wondered how she had gotten this reputation that we had heard about. The first 2 hours we learned three different phrases, which we did in groups. I figured this was her way of getting to know how we danced and what we looked like doing her work. This was nerve-wracking to me because I was being thrown choreography that I had never experienced before, and in a sense being judged upon the way I did it. It felt a little bit like an audition. After we worked on and perfected these three phrases, she put us into a tight formation and gave us some simple subtle movements for the opening. Then she told us to do it on our own timing and repeat whatever we wanted to. That formation and movement sequence became the opening of the piece.

From here she had parts of the group doing pieces of the phrase work from earlier. Then we added a part where one person moves, it makes the next person move and so on until everyone is moving, and in that part, I perform a partnering sequence with Paul. That all comes to a halt and we walk back to our clump. She taught us a simple phrase to repeat 5 times in this formation, increasing the speed each time. The movement felt a little bit foreign to me. It was sharp but small arm movements and a little bit robotic. It was unlike anything I had done in the past, so mentally I felt a little bit thrown off. I had to refocus and try to match the way Ursula's body was moving. From there we all exit then enter at different times doing different pieces of the phrases we learned at the beginning of rehearsal.

Using this same phrase work throughout is a facile way to keep everyone moving without having to learn too much choreography. We accomplished a lot today in rehearsal and in only six hours. I am exhausted after a long day of hard work and intense nerves. Thinking back on today, I am satisfied that I did the best work that I could. I also feel comforted to know that Ursula is not scary like her reputation suggests, rather she is kind, understanding and fun to work with. There is a sense of achievement in completing this first long day of rehearsal. The anticipation had me feeling anxious and nervous, and now that it is over I feel confident that this week is going to be a successful one. I am looking forward to the new challenges to come in rehearsal tomorrow and to see what she has in mind for the rest of the piece.

DAY 2:

When I arrived for day 2 I was excited to keep working on the piece, but was still tired and very sore from the first day of rehearsal. Today we finished the entire first section of the pieces. Still using the phrase work that she taught us yesterday. There were sections when people would dance different phrases simultaneously yet they seemed to fit together perfectly. Ursula is a choreographic genius. There are no counts in the piece, and she has given us no musical cues, yet somehow she choreographs the movement with such perfect timing that two people be dancing two different phrases, then do a movement or two together and go back to what they were doing. How she is able to make that work is beyond me. Today was strictly choreography, and we finished the first section. We ended rehearsal by filling out forms about ourselves as performers. It included questions such as "What do you do to prepare yourself for a performance?" "What do you love about performing?" "Who is your favorite performer and why?" This

was cool because these aspects of performing are things that I don't often think about. Also, it gave Ursula some better insight into who we are as people, dancers and performers.

DAY 3:

Today rehearsal is only 4 hours long. We began by reviewing all that we did over the weekend. Then we began the second section. The second section is much slower-paced and more intimate. It is a drastic switch in both tempo and mood and I am interested to see how these two sections are going to fit together. Today we are not using the phrase work from this weekend, everything is new. This section has a different feel, but I feel it will be a beneficial addition to the piece as a whole.

DAY 4:

Today in rehearsal we continued to work on the second section. It has lots of partner work, which is visually very effective, and I really like the slower mood of this section.

DAY 5:

Today we finished the piece completely. The piece feels really good, and those who have seen it are very impressed. I am excited to perform it. However, it is physically exhausting. We ended rehearsal today by working on focus. Again, Ursula brought some sheets for us to fill out in groups all about focus. We were asked to write what our focus should be throughout different elements of the piece such as while traveling, or while partnering or while dancing as a group. This was helpful so that we had a deeper understanding of where our focus should be throughout the entire piece, because I think that this is the hardest part of performing a piece and portraying the message that the

choreographer was intending. We got so much done today that Ursula cancelled rehearsal tomorrow!

DAY 6:

Today Ursula told us what this piece means to her. Her father died recently and it really impacted her life. This piece is telling a story of life. In the beginning, the fast section is supposed to represent how when you are young you run through life without thinking about anyone but yourself. You do not take time to enjoy life; you just take life for granted and worry only about yourself. It is not until someone close to you dies that you realize how precious life really is. That is when the second, slower section begins. You slow down and appreciate every moment of life because you realize how short life truly is. This is a deep, impacting message. When we knew that this was the story, and were able to apply it to the movement, the piece became much more than just movement. That is what we worked on today and now the piece has become more than just a dance, it is a story and it carries meaning.

DAY 7:

Today is the last day of rehearsal. Although it has been a long week with a lot of rehearsal I am not ready for it to end. Rehearsal is short today. We talked more about focus, intention and the story behind the piece and then just ran it a few times. It was really sad to say goodbye to Ursula, we had spent a long intense week together and we would probably never see her again. We finished up the last few things that needed to be taken care of, said our goodbyes and went our separate ways.

REHEARSALS WITH CHAD:

After Ursula left, Chad ran our rehearsals. We met once a week and there was very little work that needed to be done because Ursula did a great job making sure to leave no loose ends. We pretty much cleaned up the movement a little bit, talked about focus and intention, and then just ran the piece over and over again each week. Chad was trained by Ursula, which was helpful, because he knew what she would want whenever we came to a disagreement about certain movements. Working with Chad was fun and he did a really great job perfecting the piece so that it was performance ready.

Connection Between the Group and Me:

The rehearsal process with Ursula Payne's piece was not just about learning and perfecting the movement, there was an emotional connection not only to the movement and the process, but also to the group with whom I was moving. Most of the dancers in this piece were younger than me, and were dancers who I had never had the chance to get close to over the years. The intense rehearsal process of that week with Ursula made all of us become very close in a very short time. The piece that we created together was an emotional one, and in the process of learning to portray the emotion that Ursula had intended, we became emotionally close to one another.

Working with other people is the best way to get to know them, especially when it involves movement. Moving together and creating this work in such a short amount of time created a bond between us dancers that is undeniable. Not only were we moving simultaneously, but also many times we were moving in contact with one another, or our

movement was based upon the movement of another. The piece did not have musical cues; we took all of our cues off of the other dancers' movement. Thus, without working together, the piece would not have worked.

We not only had to learn the movement together, but we also had to create the right intention and emotion together. Ursula gave us various exercises to help us create this intention, but it was up to us to decide how to effectively do it, and to make it happen. We worked together as a community to create ways to demonstrated the correct emotion, and reminded one another before each run to perform these techniques. When Ursula told us what this piece meant to her, she read us a poem that summed up her emotional connection to the work. We took it upon ourselves and decided to recite this poem before each performance so that Ursula's message and intention was fresh in our minds and so that we could get into the mood necessary to properly perform this work.

Working with this group, I was able to give things to the other dancers, and in exchange, they gave things to me. I brought experience to the table. I was one of two seniors in this piece, and though each of these dancers is strong and smart and experienced, me and the other senior were able to bring our extra wisdom to the table for the younger, less experienced dancers in the group. In return, the other dancers brought support. Each dancer in this group was there to comfort another when in need, to answer a question whenever one arose, or to help clarify movement or intention when it is in question. We worked together as a group to create a successful piece, and it would not have had the positive turnout that it did without the sense of community that we, with the help of Ursula and Chad, had created throughout the rehearsal process.

Connection Between the Choreographer and Me:

This rehearsal process built a sense of community, but it also built a sense of relationship between the choreographer and I. Although I only got to work with Ursula for a week, I felt like we developed a personal connection through the movement. I was able to take Ursula's movement, concepts and intention and embody them in myself. At first, Ursula's movement felt foreign to my body. Having never taken class from her, or seen her work, I had no idea what to expect. However, after many rehearsals and discussions on intention the movement became a part of me, and I gained a better understanding of Ursula on a deeper level.

After I had learned the movement and become comfortable with it, I got to learn what this movement meant to Ursula, and then create my own meaning for her movement. Ursula's father was very important to her. They had a close relationship and he was a big part of her life. The summer before I met Ursula, her father had passed away. Although she was dealing very well with her loss, after she began creating this work she realized that the piece was about the experience she had just gone through losing her father. The first half of the piece consisted of fast-paced, rushed movements and the music was strong, fast and loud. The second half was a drastic change to the first half. The music is very slow and sentimental, and the movement reflects this change in music. The movement becomes more intimate with lots of partnering and contact, and the movements are softer and slower. Ursula explained to us that this piece is reminiscent of what she had recently gone through with the loss of your father. She said that when you are young, you rush through life without thinking about consequence. This is the first section of the piece. Then something drastic happens, such as the death of a loved one,

and it puts into perspective how precious life is. It is after this realization that you slow down and enjoy every single moment. The second section of the piece represents this realization.

Not only did this explanation impact the way I performed the movement, but it also impacted my outlook on life. Through this process, I realized that I too tend to rush through life, always looking toward the future without enjoying the here and now. After hearing Ursula's explanation, and experience, I have begun applying this concept of enjoying every moment of life, taking things one day at a time, because life is sweet, but short, and it is not something to be wasted. Because Ursula was able to affect, not only my movement style, but also my life philosophy so deeply, I felt a strong connection to her from this rehearsal process.

Who am I now?

In this rehearsal process I have learned a lot about myself, others, and most importantly about life. The first, thing that I learned is not to let rumors and reputations get to you. I was so nervous about working with Ursula because of all of the things that I had heard about how hard she is on her dancers, when in actuality there was nothing to be concerned about. Secondly, I discovered that performance is not merely about telling a story through movement, it is about capturing an emotion and forcing the audience to feel. It is about portraying a story, or in this case teaching the audience something about life. Ursula taught us how to do this with the various exercises that she gave us throughout rehearsals about what each movement means and how to make each movement portray the accurate emotion.

Although she taught me a lot of things about dancing and performance, by far the most important thing that I learned from Ursula was a life lesson. The theme of this piece was that people rush through life, taking moments and even days for granted. It isn't until something drastic happens to make them stop and realize that life is precious and every moment must be enjoyed and indulged in. In the case of this piece, and of Ursula's personal experience, it takes the death of a loved one for a person to realize how close death is to each of us and to realize how precious life is.

I have heard this idea many times in my life, but it took really studying it and performing it, portraying it to others through movement for it to be instilled in my body, mind and soul. From this process I have taken the theme of this work and applied it to my own life. Although it can be difficult at times, I try to focus on doing what makes me most happy. I cherish every moment of life, even the hard or stressful ones because I understand that each moment that we have is valuable and it is important to make the most of our time here on earth. I am thankful for all that God has given me. Whenever I start to feel overwhelmed, stressed or upset I look ahead to what the future will bring, or look behind me to the beautiful things that have happened in my past and remember those times. I know that through all the difficulties life is good.

Ursula surprised me. I anticipated working with her for a week and performing her work, then never really thinking about it again. I never could have guessed that her insight and story would change my outlook on life. She has brought out the best in me not only as a performer but also as a person. I have a better outlook on life now because of the work that she put on me in that week that we spent together. I am thankful not only to

have had the opportunity to work with such a strong, beautiful and very smart woman, but also to have gained as much from this experience as I did.

Metatext:

Writing is a good healing tool. It can help us to focus our lives and to better understand one another and ourselves. Experiences, thoughts and emotions are all key parts to our journey through life, and when we take the time to actually recognize and document these aspects they become more meaningful and prevalent to us. Journaling about dancing helps dancers to document what they were thinking or feeling at different moments in the movement process. By having this documented, dancers are able to understand what parts of dancing makes them feel good and which do not, which parts are easy and which parts need more work. Journaling provides an additional layer to the therapeutic tendencies that movement alone provides.

This reflective journey has been very educational for me. Having the opportunity to write about my experience, then to reflect back on it in great detail has made the things that I learned in this process more apparent and stagnant in my life. I will forever remember the lessons that I learned in my work with Ursula, but now having gone back through these lessons in detail, they are at the forefront of my mind and I am able to apply them to my everyday life.

Journaling has been proven beneficial in reducing stress and to a person's overall health. By taking the time to write about a difficult or impactful experience, the person learns more from it and has an easier time overcoming whatever obstacle is in the way. Journaling through this stressful rehearsal process helped me to organize my thoughts and emotions. By reflecting each day on the choreography and the process I had experienced

that day, it helped to reiterate the new material in my head and I was more prepared for rehearsal the next day. Rather than being overwhelmed by the long rehearsal days and the extensive choreography that I had to learn, I felt calm and prepared at the beginning of each day because I had journaled the night before and organized my thoughts. At the end of each day, I reflected on each moment. I recalled corrections that I had been given as well as praises. Writing these things down helped me to remember what to fix the next day in rehearsal and what I had done that Ursula liked so that I could keep doing that.

Rehearsing all day, then writing about that rehearsal each night helped me to stay focused. The work we were doing was constantly on my mind and it had all of my focus for that week. Writing helped me to focus and organize my thoughts so that they were not just jumbled in my brain, but actually in chronological order on paper.

By reflecting on my thoughts and feelings of that day, I gained a better understanding of who I am. I wrote about my emotions throughout this stressful process and this writing helped me to learn about myself. Now, I have a better understanding of how I react to certain stressful situations and the way that can be beneficial or detrimental to myself and to my learning. Knowing this about myself, I can use it to my benefit. If I begin to act in a way that will negatively affect my learning I can recognize it and stop it before it hampers my experience.

Not only was journaling beneficial for my personal growth, but it also allowed me to catalog this experience. This rehearsal process will forever be documented so that even when my memories of it fade away, I can look back and remember all that was learned and gained from my work with Ursula. This journal captured my process, but also my relationships with the other members of this cast. The memories of these people and the

way that they impacted me as a person and as a dancer will be forever remembered. Journaling about this experience has been extremely beneficial and therapeutic. Furthermore, analyzing my journal entries for personal growth has taken this therapeutic experience and made it impact me even more deeply. Dance movement therapy combines movement experiences with written work about these experiences as techniques to help those who are hurting. I was able to do this with my work in Ursula's piece and have learned so much about myself as a person and as a performer that I did not know over the last nineteen years that I have been training. Actually taking the principles of dance movement therapy and using them for myself has given me first hand insight into how beneficial it actually is. I was deeply impacted by this journey, and I believe that those who are truly suffering have an even greater experience with this type of therapeutic work with movement.

A Feasibility Study of Dance Movement Therapy:

After reviewing my performance experience and the therapeutic impact that it had on me, I wanted to learn more about the field of dance movement therapy. Therefore, I have conducted a feasibility study to see if I can share the healing powers of dance with others by pursuing a career in dance movement therapy. I wanted to learn what it took to become a dance movement therapist, and if my undergraduate studies put me on the right track to this career or not. After writing my perspectives essay on the details of dance movement therapy, I understood what dance therapy was, and the approaches it used. However, in this feasibility study I wanted to uncover more of the application aspects of dance movement therapy. My research answered all of the questions that I had about this career including what it is, how to become certified, where therapists work, and what

kind of patients they work with. After conducting this research, I know what it takes to pursue this career and once certified, how beneficial it will be to me and to others. I have a better understanding of what the next step is in pursuing a credential in dance movement therapy. My research has led me to the conclusion that dance movement therapy would be a good career for me because I love helping people and I love to dance. That is what this field is all about, helping people through dance. I also now understand that I have all of the prerequisites to become a Registered Dance Movement Therapist, and what to do next in order to pursue this career.

What is Dance Movement Therapy?

“Dance therapy is a type of psychotherapy that uses movement to further the social, cognitive, emotional and physical development of the individual” (www.healthline.com). Dance movement therapy is a creative arts therapy which stems from the natural expressivity of dance itself. It is founded on the principle that the body, mind and spirit are all interconnected. Through movement of the body, dance therapy strengthens the connection between the body and the mind, ultimately improving the mental and physical health of all clients. This form of therapy aims to help those clients who seek help with self-esteem, recovery or trauma or relief from their psychological and behavioral disorders. It is a career for dancers who are interested in the connection between psychology and movement. With a career in dance movement therapy, dancers are given the opportunity to share the healing power of movement with people who are hurting.

Dance movement therapy is commonly used for psychiatric patients. Movement provides an easy way for a person to express their emotions, even when they are

recovering from a situation so traumatic that they cannot speak about it (www.healthline.com). Through movement, patients are able to communicate with their therapists when they cannot find the right words. Often, after a major trauma it is hard for patients to discuss what they went through for fear of having to relive it. Thus, this form of artistic therapy is frequently used for patients recovering from sexual abuse or rape. They can express their feelings about this traumatic experience without actually having to talk about what happened. This allows the victims to recover much more quickly and painlessly. If the victim never wants to discuss what they went through, then they will forever keep their pain bottled up inside. Movement is so natural that patients can communicate their feelings through movement when they cannot with words. The purpose of therapy through movement is to help these patients to build their self-confidence, gain a positive self-image, improve their communication skills and provide emotional stability (<http://findarticles.com>).

This form of art therapy can also benefit those patients suffering from a chronic illness or life-threatening disease. The movement helps them to deal with the pain, fear of death and their changes in body image. Often, their movement therapy classes provide a way for these patients to relax. It is a way for them to forget their pain and emotional struggles, even if only for an hour. It also allows them to express their feelings on subjects that are difficult to talk about, such as approaching death (www.healthline.com). It is not about intricate dance steps; rather it is a form of free-flowing dance. Because movement is a natural part of life, it allows these patients who are chronically ill to feel human again. Between the stresses of medications and hospital life, movement allows the chronically ill to feel free and move like other average human beings do daily.

Dance movement therapy is an important because it provides therapeutic aspects that other forms of therapy cannot. Moving freely, without restriction, allows human beings to really feel. It gives patients the opportunity to express their pain, frustration or even just themselves in ways that they cannot with words alone. Movement is a natural part of life that connects the body to the mind and spirit. Dance movement therapy helps patients to make that connection using movement. It allows those who are hurting to feel whole again.

How Do You Become a Dance Movement Therapist?

There are various programs through which a dancer can become certified as a dance movement therapist. Typically, it is required that they have a Master's degree in dance movement therapy or in counseling or psychology. For those dancers who already have their MA in psychology or counseling, there are alternate programs through which they can become certified as a dance movement therapist. All certification programs require a clinical internship after the coursework is complete.

Prior to pursuing a Master's degree in dance movement therapy, it is required that the student have extensive dance experience and a liberal arts background including psychology coursework for their undergraduate degree. A graduate degree in dance movement therapy can be pursued through specialized programs at various universities nationwide. The American Dance Therapy Association, ADTA, must approve the programs in order for the therapist to be qualified. The universities that fulfill all requirements listed in the ADTA Standards for Graduate Dance/Movement Therapy Programs include, Antioch University in New England of Keene, NH, Columbia College of Chicago, IL, Drexel University in Philadelphia, PA, Lesley University in Cambridge,

MA, Naropa University of Boulder, CO, and Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, NY. Graduates from these ADTA approved programs are qualified to be a Registered Dance/Movement Therapist or R-DMT.

The other means by which a dancer can become a certified dance movement therapist is called Alternate Route to dance/movement therapy training. In order to do so, one must get a Master's or Doctorate degree in either dance or psychology, while taking dance therapy credits in addition. It is also required that the student have an extensive background in dance/movement. I researched one Alternate Route program in particular which is sponsored by The Center for Movement Education and Research. The following is a table, listing the courses necessary, how many hours each course requires and how much each of these courses cost.

Course	Hours	Fee
Dance/Movement Therapy Theory I	45	\$1,125.00
Dance/Movement Therapy Theory II	45	\$1,125.00
Dance/Movement Therapy Theory III	45	\$1,125.00
Anatomy/Kinesiology	22	\$375.00
Laban Movement Analysis (LMA)	TBD	
Kestenberg Movement Profile	20	\$400.00
Dance/Movement Therapy with Adults	30	\$750.00
Dance/Movement Therapy with Seniors	30	\$750.00
Dance/Movement Therapy in Healthcare: Prevention, Treatment and Aftercare	25	\$650.00
Dance/Movement Therapy with Children/Adolescents	30	\$750.00
Dance/Movement Therapy Professional Roles and Ethics	25	\$650.00
Dance/Movement Therapy Internship Preparation	15	\$400.00
Dance/Movement Therapy Group Process	45	\$1,125.00

Table Courtesy of The Center for Movement Education and Research
(www.movement-education.org).

The following is an overview of each of the courses required to complete this Alternate Route Program provided directly from The Center for Movement Education and Research (www.movement-education.org).

Dance/Movement Therapy Theory I:

Course Content/Description:

This is an introductory level course reviewing the theoretical origins of dance/movement therapy as a therapeutic modality. The foundational tenets defining dance/movement therapy as a creative, healing and integrating process will be presented in relation to self and other awareness and insight oriented symbolic functioning. The course will review the history and conceptual development of the major pioneers in the field and the application of their work within various settings. Additionally the cultural, ritual, modern dance and nonverbal communication historical elements will be reviewed.

□ Course Objectives:

- 1) Students will become familiar with the basic concepts of dance/movement therapy.
- 2) Students will develop an understanding of the interaction between sensory processes and creative emotional expression.
- 3) Students will learn the relevance of dance/movement therapy concepts to self-awareness and symbolic insight.
- 4) Students will learn the relevance of dance/movement therapy concepts to relational dynamics with others.
- 5) Students will gain an experiential and theoretical knowledge of dance/movement therapy principles.

Dance/Movement Therapy Theory II:

Course Content/Description:

This is a Level II Theory Course in Dance/Movement Therapy elaborating on the concepts of the creative process, the creative process in dance/ movement therapy and the role of the "moving imagination" in promoting psychological transformation.

The importance of fostering creative processes in therapeutic dance experience will be reviewed from a depth oriented perspective. The course will also investigate the creative process involved in developing an empathic therapeutic relationship in dance/movement therapy. Each day movement experiential will be offered to explore the presented concepts as well as the creative aspects of improvisational and choreographic processes as they pertain to dance/movement therapy.

□ Course Objectives:

- 1) Students will become familiar with the psychological nature of the creative process.
- 2) Students will become familiar with how creative movement involvement promotes

transformation.

- 3) Students will become familiar with concepts drawn from depth-oriented psychology that relate to dance/movement therapy.
- 4) Students will become familiar with ways in which creative growth and the development of a therapeutic relationship converge.
- 5) Students will gain an experiential and theoretical knowledge of dance/movement therapy principles.

Dance/Movement Therapy Theory III:

Course Description:

A sense of self is created over the span of a person's lifetime and this sense of self is an evolving subjective and changing psychological organization. It initially develops within the context of the intersubjective relationship established by a child with his or her primary caregiver or caregivers. The caregiver or caregivers also transmit the worldview of the culture or cultures to which they belong and pass this cultural worldview onto the child as the sense of self is developing. □ □ This course will focus on the role that embodied and enacted experience play in the construction of a person's sense of self, the internalization of his or her cultural worldview or worldviews and the establishment and maintenance of intersubjective relationships. □ □ Given the importance of an internalized sense of self and the cultural worldview structures formulated within intersubjective relational experiences and, potentially explored within dance/movement therapy sessions and groups whose members may hold different worldviews, the dynamic need for cultural awareness and sensitivity in the dance/movement therapy experience and relationship will be addressed.

□ Course Objectives:

- 1) Students will develop an understanding of how a cultural worldview influences the kind of "self" (body self, body image and psychological self) the person develops.
- 2) Students will develop an understanding of how a cultural worldview determines the norms of social behavior deemed appropriate to a particular culture.
- 3) Students will develop an understanding of how a cultural worldview influences the way a person thinks about healing.
- 4) Students will learn how benign regression has the potential to facilitate a creative potential space in dance/movement therapy sessions that can lead to self-transformation.
- 5) Students will begin to understand how the dance/movement therapist provides particular □ developmental functions and developmentally based interventions that enable a client to □ acquire increased emotional self-regulation and self-coherence.

6) Students will develop an understanding of the imperative need for cultural awareness and sensitivity in the dance/movement therapy experience and relationship.

Anatomy/Kinesiology:

Course Content/Description:

This course covers the anatomical and kinesiological science of human motion. The identification of joints and muscles used to perform actions will be reviewed with an emphasis on understanding the proper and safe sequencing of movement actions in preparation for working with clients.

Laban Movement Analysis (LMA):

Course Content/Description:

This course will introduce the basic principles of Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) and Bartenieff Fundamentals (BF) as a system for analyzing the complexity of human movement based on the theories of Rudolf Laban and Irmgard Bartenieff.

The class will be structured from a body knowledge approach utilizing physical performance and observation methods. Class content will examine principles and concepts of movement perception and observation, descriptive analysis, contextual interpretation and creative exploration and design. All classes will be taught via personal movement experiences, structured observations and class discussions.

□ Course Objectives:

- 1) Identify and practice the core concepts and principles of Laban/Movement Analysis (LMA). □ Students will be able to demonstrate both movement and theoretical knowledge.
- 2) Identify and practice the core concepts and principles of the Bartenieff Fundamentals.
- 3) Students will develop a LMA model for Movement Observation and they will practice observational skills.
- 4) Students will be able to accurately utilize LMA and BF terminology.

Kestenberg Movement Profile:

Course Description:

The Kestenberg Movement Profile (KMP) is a comprehensive movement assessment tool that detects the presence of both healthy and dysfunctional movement patterns in individuals of all ages. It traces developmentally based patterns throughout the life span and can be used to describe personality, relational and psychological domains.

Dance/movement therapists and those trained in the KMP can apply its concepts in their clinical/educational work by designing treatment plans and implementing appropriate interventions based on the individual's movement portrait. Goals include helping the individual assess healthy choices and coping skills through accessing strengths and broadening them.

Dance/Movement Therapy with Adults:

Course Content/Description: .

This DMT theory and practice course will cover the specific developmental needs of adults and the DMT skills pertinent to working with this population age group. The course will include movement assessment, diagnosis and treatment planning specific to the needs of adults including adult psychiatric populations. Additionally, the clinical methods, leadership skills, and framework for understanding the client individually, within groups, families and systems will be reviewed.

□ Course Objectives:

- 1) Students will become familiar with short and long term dance/movement therapy issues in the treatment of adults.
- 2) Students will become familiar with approaches to and applications of dance/movement therapy in a variety of adult populations.
- 3) Students will become familiar with various aspects of the relationship dynamics between the adult client and dance/movement therapist.
- 4) Students will gain an experiential and theoretical knowledge of dance/movement therapy principles.

Dance/Movement Therapy with Seniors:

Course Content/Description:

This DMT theory and practice course will cover the specific developmental needs of seniors and the DMT skills pertinent to working with this population age group. The course will include movement assessment, diagnosis and treatment planning specific to the needs of seniors including geriatric/psychiatric populations. Additionally, the clinical methods, leadership skills, and framework for understanding the client individually, within groups, families and systems will be reviewed.

□ Course Objectives:

- 1) Students will become familiar with short and long term dance/movement therapy issues in the treatment of seniors.

- 2) Students will become familiar with approaches to and applications of dance/movement therapy in a variety of senior populations.
- 3) Students will become familiar with various aspects of the relationship dynamics between the senior client and dance/movement therapist.
- 4) Students will gain an experiential and theoretical knowledge of dance/movement therapy principles.

Dance/Movement Therapy in Healthcare: Prevention, Treatment and Aftercare:

Course Content/Description:

This dance/movement therapy theory and practice course covers the role of dance/movement therapy in the prevention and treatment of illness, and in the maintenance of health and well-being. This course will be divided into three sections to cover the dance/movement therapy principles and applications specific to prevention, to treatment, and to aftercare.

In the section on prevention, this course focuses on dance/movement therapy contributions to health and well being in response to the somatic, emotional and cognitive consequences of stress and trauma. The section on treatment addresses dance/movement therapy in a medical context and as an adjunctive treatment for illness.

The section on aftercare focuses on the role of dance/movement therapy in coming to terms with treatment outcomes, creating new choices, and finding new meaning. All sections will focus on self-regulation, self-expression, and self in relationship, all fundamental to health and well being. The specific attention throughout to body awareness, creativity, and attunement, will amplify aspects of dance/movement therapy theory and practice, as well as provide a foundation for a somatically oriented psychotherapy practice.

□ Course Objectives:

- 1) Students will become familiar with the concepts of prevention and wellness in dance/movement therapy practice.
- 2) Students will gain understanding of the cognitive, somatic and emotional impact of stress and trauma on health and well-being.
- 3) Students will develop an understanding of the application of dance/movement therapy theory and practice in the treatment of illness in a medical context.
- 4) Students will learn interventions, applicable both to the student as therapist and to work with patients that are grounded in the principles of dance/movement therapy and based in the concept of preventive care and maintenance of health.

Dance/Movement Therapy with Children/Adolescents:

Course Content/Description:

This DMT theory and practice course will cover the specific developmental needs of children and adolescents and the DMT skills pertinent to working with this population age group. The course will include movement assessment, diagnosis and treatment planning specific to the needs of children/adolescents including child/adolescent psychiatric populations. Additionally, the clinical methods, leadership skills, and framework for understanding the client individually, within groups, families and systems will be reviewed.

□ Course Objectives:

- 1) Students will become familiar with short and long term dance/movement therapy issues in the treatment of children and adolescents.
- 2) Students will become familiar with approaches to and applications of dance/movement therapy in a variety of child/adolescent populations.
- 3) Students will become familiar with various aspects of the relationship dynamics between the child client and dance/movement therapist.
- 4) Students will gain an experiential and theoretical knowledge of dance/movement therapy principles.

Dance/Movement Therapy Professional Roles and Ethics:

Course Content/Description:

This course will review the critical aspects of professionalism involved in the practice of dance/movement therapy. The professional roles and ethical standards applying to private practice work and agency settings will be covered.

□ Course Objectives:

- 1) Students will become familiar with and come to understand the importance of the Federal □ HIPAA Regulations.
- 2) Students will become familiar with the American Dance Therapy Association's Code of Ethics and □ Ethical Standards of Practice for Dance/Movement Therapists
- 3) Students will become familiar with the importance of their professional role when practicing □ as a dance/movement therapist.

Dance/Movement Therapy Internship Preparation:

Course Content/Description:

This course focuses on preparing the dance/movement therapy student for his/her clinical internship. The ADTA internship requirements and the dual level of R-DMT and BC-DMT registry will be reviewed as will the ADTA Applicant Handbook/Application for Registry via alternate route training. The importance of maintaining a professional role in ethical practice and the inherent responsibilities of internship training will be covered.

Please Note: CMER is not responsible for placing students in fieldwork or internship settings.

Course Objectives:

- 1) The student will become familiar with the ADTA internship requirements.
- 2) The student will become familiar with internship possibilities and search methods.
- 3) The student will become familiar with various facets of the supervisory relationship

Dance/Movement Therapy Group Process:**Course Content/Description:**

This course covers the nature of group process in dance/movement therapy theory and practice. The intent is to deepen an understanding of the psychological meaning and expressive language of movement in terms of personal and interpersonal experiences. It will stress the effective functioning of the dance/movement therapist in an empathic clinical role. This course will be taught from a didactic and experiential perspective.

Course Objectives:

- 1) Students will become familiar with the nature of group processes in dance/movement therapy.
- 2) Students will become familiar with how DMT group processes transform over the course of time.
- 3) Students will become familiar with the unique relationship constellations created among group participants, and between group participants and the dance/movement therapist.
- 4) Students will gain a didactic and experiential knowledge of group dance/movement therapy principles.

****Course descriptions Courtesy of The Center for Movement Education and Research**

(www.movement-education.org).

Once this alternate route training has been completed, the student must apply for the R-DMT. The requirements to apply for the R-DMT are listed in the following section provided by the American Dance Therapy Association (www.adta.org).

DANCE/MOVEMENT THERAPY CERTIFICATION BOARD, Inc.

Dear R-DMT applicant,

The Dance/Movement Therapy Certification Board (DMTCB) welcomes your interest in becoming a Registered Dance/Movement Therapist. We understand the commitment you have made and the hard work involved to progress to this point in your career path. In an effort to support your application we have created this handbook to guide you through the process.

Please be aware that there are three options for R-DMT application procedures. Be sure you select the one that suits your circumstances. The three options you will be asked to choose from are:

1. Graduates of approved master's degree dance/movement therapy programs
2. Graduates of other master's degree dance/movement therapy programs
3. Alternate route training in dance/movement therapy

Carefully read through all sections of the handbook before getting started. If you have questions or need assistance please contact Gloria Farrow [REDACTED] who will direct you to the appropriate DMTCB member.

Sincerely,

Dance/Movement Therapy Certification Board of ADTA